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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2005

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Ratzinger Is Catholics' New Leader - Milliyet
Ratzinger Opposes Turkey's EU Membership - Hurriyet
New Pope Is Anti-Turkish - Sabah
'Panzerkardinal' Ratzinger Elected Pope - Aksam
Ratzinger Was John Paul II's Best Man - Posta
Turkey to Buy 10 Drone Planes From Israel - Hurriyet
PM Erdogan to Visit Yad Vashem - Sabah
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'Hawkish' Bolton Accused of Harassment - Aksam
Harlem Boy's Choir Enchants Turks in Ankara - Sabah

OPINION MAKERS

Ratzinger, Firebrand Conservative, Elected 265th Pope -
Cumhuriyet
German Ratzinger Is Catholics' New Pope - Zaman
Ratzinger Believes Turkey Should Form Union With Arabs -
Radikal
Turkey Awards Israel Contract for Drones - Radikal
1.5 Million Armenians to Commemorate 'Genocide' in Yerevan -
Zaman
US Troops Beat Iraqi Lawmaker - Yeni Safak
Iran Halts Al-Jazeera Broadcasts - Yeni Safak
Cuba Wants US to Open Guantanamo to Inspection - Yeni Safak

BRIEFING

New Pope Ratzinger Raises Concern Among Turks: All papers
give extensive coverage to the election of Cardinal Joseph
Ratzinger of Germany as the new pope. The new pope's
opposition to Turkey joining the European Union could raise
obstacles to Turkish EU membership, according to the
reports. The 'anti-Turkish' Pope earlier said that the
Turks should form a union with Arab countries instead of
seeking membership in the EU. He is among the backers of
the concept a 'privileged partnership' for Turkey that would
fall short of full membership. A news commentary in "Zaman"
says that if the Vatican were to join France, Austria,
Denmark, and the Netherlands in opposition to Turkey, it
would send the wrong message not only to Turks but to all
Muslims.

Turkey to Buy Military Drones From Israel: Turkey is set to
buy 10 military drone airplanes and ground stations from
Israel at a cost of 183 million USD in a deal reached ahead
of a fence-mending visit to Israel by Prime Minister
Erdogan. The visit is scheduled for early May. A joint
venture between two Israeli firms, Israel Aircraft
Industries (IAI) and Elbit, was awarded the contract for the
10 aircraft, surveillance equipment, and ground control
stations, Turkey's undersecretariat for defense industries
said in a statement on Tuesday. The Israelis are to finish
their part of the project within 24 to 30 months, according
to the statement. A report in "Hurriyet" claims that the
Turkish military had rejected the US-produced 'Predator' in
favor of the Israeli option. "Vatan" adds that the deal
with the Israelis could eventually be expanded to include
between 30-40 unmanned aircraft.

Shalom Supports Turkey on Armenian 'Genocide' Claims:
"Cumhuriyet" reports that Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan
Shalom met with 'influential figures' in Jewish
organizations in the United States to seek support for
Turkey against the Armenian 'genocide' campaign in the US.
Shalom reportedly asked the Jewish organizations to block a
possible approval by the US Congress of a resolution on
claims of 'genocide,' which may damage the 'special
relationship' between the US, Israel, and Turkey.
Diplomatic sources said that the 'mood' in Congress is 'not
positive' due to the March 1 rejection by Turks of the

deployment of US troops through Turkey to Iraq, and because of strong criticism against the US by PM Erdogan. "Cumhuriyet" believes that the Armenian lobby will push the Congress until the last minute for approval of a 'genocide' resolution. In a report from Washington, "Milliyet" quotes American Armenian Assembly (AAA) chairman Anthony Barsamian as saying he does not expect President Bush to use the word 'genocide.' Barsamian added, however, that the President will come closer to recognizing the 'genocide' claim than he has in the past. Barsamian said he remains hopeful that the US Congress will approve a 'genocide' resolution this year. "Milliyet" notes that a 'genocide' resolution could come to the floor of Congress for a vote even after the Armenian commemoration on April 24.

Bill on Incirlik Airbase Submitted to Council of Ministers: A bill corresponding to the US request for a wider use of Incirlik Airbase was submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval on Monday, papers report. The bill would extend the duration of the existing regulation that allows the use of Incirlik by coalition forces for humanitarian purposes. Papers expect the bill to be finalized according to the outcome of the vote in the US Congress on Armenian 'genocide' claims.

Ankara Briefs US, Israel, EU on Sezer's Syria Visit: The Turkish Embassy in Syria briefed EU ambassadors, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) briefed US and Israeli Ambassadors in Ankara on the results of the recent visit to Syria by President Sezer to Syria, papers report. The Turks said the main topics of Sezer's meetings in Damascus had been domestic reforms and Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon. They insisted that Sezer had conveyed to President Assad the message from the international community on the need to pull out of Lebanon.

Turkish Detainee Freed From Guantanamo: A 24-year-old Turkish man, Salih Uyar, who spent over three years in Guantanamo on suspicion of ties to Al-Qaeda was released and sent to Incirlik air base in southern Turkey. Uyar was then freed by a local prosecutor for lack of evidence, but was ordered to be handed over to the Turkish military for draft evasion. The Turkish media reports that two other Turkish citizens are still being held in Guantanamo.

Investigation Shows Villagers Killed by Security Forces in 1994: The Prosecutor's office in Diyarbakir said Tuesday that no evidence had been found to support claims by Turkish security forces that 38 people were killed by PKK terrorists in two villages in Turkey's southeastern province of Sirnak in 1994. The prosecutor told the press that the villagers had been killed by bombs that had 'fallen' from planes and helicopters. A local villager told "Milliyet" that the two villages had been bombed by Turkish security forces after the villagers refused to become village guards.

Erdogan Due in Afghanistan: Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan will depart for Afghanistan early Wednesday, papers report. In Kabul, the Turkish Prime Minister will call on President Karzai, former king of Afghanistan Mohammad Zakir Shah, the ISAF command, and the Turkish community in Kabul.

World Bank Report Shows 'Unfair' Wealth Distribution in Turkey: "Vatan" carries a World Bank report showing that income disparity in Turkey is much greater than previously thought. The poorest 10 percent (seven million Turks) receive only 2.3 percent of national income (6.9 billion USD), while the wealthiest 10 percent receive 31 percent (92.1 billion USD).

AKP Lawmaker Quits Parliament: Cemal Kaya, a deputy of the ruling AK Party, resigned his parliamentary seat on Tuesday in order to defend himself against allegations of involvement in a corruption scandal related to contracts awarded by the Ministry of Energy. Press reports suggest that Kaya resigned at the insistence of Prime Minister Erdogan. The PM termed the resignation 'appropriate.' Kaya remains a member of AKP.

Mersin Becomes a Center for Smuggled Fuel: Turkey's southern port city of Mersin has become a center for smuggled fuel from Iraq, with 57 distribution companies now operating in the city, "Zaman" reports. A parliamentary committee has learned that there is one gas station for every 300 cars in Mersin. Smuggled fuel costs Turkey 3 billion USD per year, according to the report.

Harlem Boy's Choir Performs in Ankara: On a first visit to Turkey, the Boy's Choir of Harlem gave an 'exceptionally delightful' concert in Ankara on Monday and Tuesday, papers report. Formed by Dr. Walter Turnbull, the Harlem Boy's Choir is considered to be among the most famous choirs in the history of American music, writes Turkey's leading daily "Hurriyet." US and Israeli Ambassadors to Turkey, Eric Edelman and Pinhas Avivi were among the audience who gave the choir a standing ovation after the concert, says the paper. US Embassy Ankara co-sponsored the choir's

participation in the 22nd Ankara Music Festival.

EDITORIAL OPINION: US Foreign Policy, Cyprus, AKP and Turkish Nationalism

"Washington Plays with Fire"

Rusen Cakir argued in the mass appeal "Vatan" (4/20): "The US collaborated with the totalitarian regimes of the Islamic world for years, and refrained from interfering in their domestic affairs. In the aftermath of 9/11, the US administration decided to 'drain the swamp' as part of its struggle against radical Islamist networks such as Al-Qaeda. . The essence of the US policy is to conquer hearts and minds to win the war against terrorism. For this purpose, the US is advocating democracy, liberty, women's rights, and free market values in Islamic countries. The establishment of direct links with opposition movements and NGOs that will pressure the rulers are part of this policy. The approach is a product of the neo-cons in the US administration, who don't even mind that their project is portrayed as a kind of 'democratic imperialism.' Yet the general feeling in the Islamic world is different. The Islamic world views the project as 'imperialist,' and believes that the rhetoric about democracy is only a pretext. The effect of this is that the more the US wants democracy in this region, the more anti-Americanism grows. . The neo-cons are nevertheless pleased because they consider the situations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, and Kyrgyzstan as signs of their victory. When the Red Army pulled out of Afghanistan, that was also interpreted as a triumph. But circumstances only helped the Taliban and Al-Qaeda to flourish there. Today, one cannot feel very sure about the possible consequences of spending more dollars in the name of democracy. The Islamic world certainly needs reforms to greater democracy, freedom, and women's rights. This will happen sooner or later. But such developments cannot emerge through pressure, nor can they be bought with money. Democracy cannot flourish through help from outside."

"Hope is there, Sign yet to come"

Sami Kohen observed in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (4/20): "It seems that the whole world, including the UN, the US, the EU and Russia, is pleased with Mehmet Ali Talat's election as president. Talat is considered a realistic, pro-settlement leader. Everybody is talking about increasing chances for a Cyprus settlement, and diplomats believe that the ball is now in Papadopoulos' court. It remains to be seen whether the Greek Cypriot leader will be willing to take advantage of this enormous chance for a settlement, and whether the international community will seriously engage in the process. Currently we can talk about hopes and expectations, but concrete signs of progress have yet to come. . There is a direct link between the stance of the Greek Cypriot leadership and the level of determination within the international community. So far, such a determination has not been seen. The UNSYG awaits a call from both sides before taking action. The UNSYG does not want to force Papadopoulos even though his current stance is viewed as an obstacle. The EU remains helpless. The EU does not like Papadopoulos' position either, but has refrained from taking action that might help to change it. The US has been occupied with other priorities, namely Iraq, and Cyprus is not part of its immediate agenda. Other international forces, including Russia, do not seem to have any intention of taking an active role. Given the circumstances, it is up to Turkey's diplomatic skill to try to secure greater involvement by influential international players. Talat is about to take some steps in this regard. If these steps come to nothing, there is little more that can be done."

Erdogan: "Isn't There Any Province Besides Diyarbakir?"
Muharrem Sarikaya wrote in the mainstream daily "Sabah" (4/20): When Prime Minister Erdogan came out of the AKP group meeting yesterday, he shook our hands and drew us to one side. 'How's it going?' he asked. We gave a clear answer: 'things are fine with us, but how about you? You said the EU is trying to divide Turkey. Is there something happening that we aren't aware of?' Erdogan gave the following answer: 'You need to read that statement very carefully. For us, the important thing is that we are carrying out our official contacts with EU officials. There is no problem there. But all of us also know about the negative behavior of some circles within the EU. They come to Turkey and travel around from Ankara to Istanbul and Diyarbakir. All of them go to Diyarbakir. Isn't there any other province in Turkey besides Diyarbakir? Is their intention really clear?' When we asked the Prime Minister why his words had been misunderstood, he went after the CHP: 'We have not taken a single step back from our EU goal. We are focused in working toward October 3. But the main opposition party has adopted a different position, as if the EU were not its goal. They are saying senseless things, claiming we want to break off our relations with the EU.'

But since we are all agreed on our EU target, they shouldn't say these kinds of things or try to draw distinctions on that issue.' When we noted that some had interpreted his words as an attempt to steer his policy toward nationalism, Erdogan responded in this way: 'I am a nationalist. But I have already announced the limits of my nationalism. We will never, ever implement policies based on ethnic, regional, or religious nationalism. These are our limits, and we will not make concessions.' We later were chatting with Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul as he came out of the meeting. We pointed out that the writer Ali Bulac had said the AKP is starting to slide toward a nationalist policy. Gul said he had read Bulac's statement, but added that 'probably since he left us, Bulac has had difficulty in understanding what we are doing.'"

EDELMAN